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Fifty-seventh session
Item 11 (a) of the provisional agenda

CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE QUESTIONS OF: TORTURE AND DETENTION

United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture

Report of the Secretary-General

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GE.01-10332 (E)

I. ANNUAL REPORTS

1. In conformity with arrangements adopted by the General Assembly for the management of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for the Victims of Torture, the Secretary-General draws up an annual report to the General Assembly, indicating the funds available, pledges made and contributions received, together with disbursements from the Fund (resolution 36/151 of 16 December 1981).

2. The Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 2000/43 of 20 April 2000 (para. 41), requested the Secretary-General to keep it informed on an annual basis of the operations of the Fund. The previous report of the Secretary-General to the Commission (E/CN.4/2000/60 and Add.1) is available to the Commission at its fifty-seventh session. The present report, drawn up on 16 December 2000, complements and updates the annual report, prepared on 13 July 2000 (A/55/178), submitted to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session under agenda item 114 (a).

II. FINANCIAL STATUS

A. Grants paid or pending or allocated for urgent assistance

3. At its nineteenth session (15-26 May 2000), the Board of Trustees of the Fund had recommended that, for the period June 2000-May 2001, grants of a little over US$ 7 million (A/55/178, para. 11, and press release HR/00/40 of 21 June 2000) should be awarded to medical, psychological, social, legal, humanitarian and other assistance programmes around the world for victims of torture and members of their families. On 15 June 2000, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights approved these grants on behalf of the Secretary-General (ibid., para. 12). As on 15 December 2000, based on information available to the Office of the High Commissioner, the amount of grants paid since 13 July 2000 was US$ 5.2 million. Approximately US$ 760,000 has been paid since that time in the form of grants which have been withheld pending satisfactory additional information. Some US$ 355,000, allocated for grants still pending, could be paid before the Board's next session (18 May-1 June 2001), if the additional information requested by the Board or the Fund secretariat has been received from the organizations concerned and deemed to be satisfactory by the secretariat. A list of organizations financed by the Fund in 2000 may be found in table 4 (ibid., para. 15). In addition, an amount of US$ 300,000 has been allocated, prior to the next Board session, to meet requests for urgent assistance from victims of torture in countries lacking appropriate treatment facilities and to assist victims of amputation and mutilation coming from Sierra Leone (ibid., para. 14, and annex II, section VI, para. 31). A second category of grants, totalling US$ 400,000, has also been set aside for organizations which might experience financial difficulties prior to the next Board session (ibid., para. 14, and annex II, section VII, para. 30).

B. Contributions paid

4. The contributions received in time for allocation at the nineteenth session of the Board are shown in the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly (A/55/178, para. 6, table 1). Contributions that had not been officially recorded by the Treasurer of the United Nations before the nineteenth session and were recorded afterwards are shown in table 1 below, drawn up on 15 December 2000 from the information available to the Office of the

High Commissioner. The Board will take them into consideration at its twentieth session, together with any others that are duly recorded before 18 May 2001. Contributions paid after 15 December 2000 will be reflected in an addendum to the present report.

Table 1. Paid contributions that will be taken into consideration at the nineteenth session of the Board of Trustees

State	Amount (US$)	Recorded	Intended for	Contribution No.
Andorra	2 650	31.05.00	1999	6
"	8 300	15.11.00	2000	7
Cameroon	6 783	15.11.00	2001	4
Chile	10 000	30.05.00	2000	8
Cyprus	770	31.10.00	2000	12
Iran (Islamic Rep. of)	867	10.10.00		1
Japan	60,000	09.06.00	2000	15
Malta	1 500	13.09.00	2000	6
New Zealand	12 438	October 2000	2000	14
Philippines	613[a]	31.10.00	1999	4
Poland	10,000	24.10.00	2001	2
Rep. of Korea	10,000	01.09.00	2000	6
Spain	37,400	27.09.00	2000	15
Sri Lanka	1,000	29.06.00	2000	9
Tunisia	2,000	31.07.00	1999	9
Turkey	5,000	29.09.00	2000	2
United Nations staff at Geneva	13,397	19.04.00	1998	1
Mr. D. Prémont	117	29.05.00	2000	2
TOTAL	**182 835**			

[a] Partial payment of its pledge for 1999 (see note to table 2).

C. Pledges

5. Donor Governments make pledges to the Fund in the following ways:

(a) Directly by letter to the Office of the High Commissioner, copied to the secretariat of the Fund (for the address, see para. 30 below);

(b) At the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities held in New York in the first week of each November;

(c) At the annual session of the Commission;

(d) At the briefings for regular donors organized by the Fund secretariat;

(e) At the meeting between donors and members of the Board, held on the last day of the annual session in May (the next meeting should take place on 1 June 2001);

(f) When a State party to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment submits a report to the Committee Against Torture.

6. As on 15 December 2000, according to information available to the Office of the High Commissioner, the following pledges had been made:

Table 2. Pledges

State	Amount (US$)	Intended for	Announced on	Contribution No.
Algeria	5 000	2001	01.11.00	10
Belgium	64 327	2000	15.12.00	11
Brazil	10 000	1995	20.12.94	7
"	10 000	1996	01.11.95	8
"	10 000	1998	04.11.97	9
Chile	10 000	2001	01.11.00	9
Cyprus	2 174	2001	01.11.00	13
Germany	113 219	2000[a]	10.04.00	19
Italy	117 855	1999[b]	08.12.00	11
	117 855	2000[b]	08.12.00	12
	117 855	2001	05.07.00	13
Monaco	10 000	2001	01.11.00	8
Philippines	1 982[c]	1999	04.11.98	5
"	2 800	2000	01.02.99	6
Tunisia	1 393	2000	01.11.00	10
Turkey	5 000	2001	01.11.00	3
United Kingdom	216 666	1999	02.02.99	12[d]
TOTAL	**816 126**			

[a] According to the Government, a contribution of DM 250,000 was paid on 30 June 2000. According to information available to the Office of the High Commissioner, however, the official receipt of the United Nations Treasurer has not yet been provided.

[b] According to its letter dated 8 December 2000 and received on 15 December 2000 by the Office of the High Commissioner, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has ordered the payment of Lit 464,705,000, corresponding to € 240,000, for the years 1999 and 2000.

[c] US$ 613 was paid on 31 October 2000 as partial payment for 1999 (see note to table 1).

[d] Contribution paid in August 1999 to the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in New York, according to information provided by the Government. The official receipt from the Treasurer has not yet been received by OHCHR. The thirteenth contribution, for 2000, has been duly recorded and is included in table 1 of document A/55/178.

7. Any contribution officially recorded by the Treasurer of the United Nations after 18 May 2001 will be reflected in the accounts for the following session (May 2002). The Board adopts its funding recommendations on the basis of the contributions actually paid and duly recorded in the Fund's account by the Treasurer; it does not take pledges into consideration.

III. FUND-RAISING

8. The General Assembly, by its resolution 55/89 of 4 December 2000, the Commission, by its resolution 2000/43 (para. 36) of 20 April 2000, the Committee against Torture, the Board of Trustees of the Fund, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on questions relating to torture and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as stated in the joint declaration and message on the occasion of the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, 26 June 2000 (A/55/178, annex I, section A, paras. 3 and 4), expressed their gratitude and appreciation to those Governments, organizations and individuals that had contributed to the Fund. The United Nations bodies particularly concerned with issues relating to torture encouraged donors that had already contributed to the Fund to continue such contributions, if possible with a substantial increase, in order to take into consideration the ever-increasing requests for assistance. They also appealed to Governments, organizations and individuals to contribute regularly to the Fund, if possible on an annual basis, preferably by 1 March of each year, so that their contributions could be duly recorded and available for allocation at the Board's following session or, in any event, before the Board's annual meeting (i.e., for 2001, before 18 May).

9. The Secretary-General was requested to transmit this appeal to all Governments. In her letter of 18 October 2000, the High Commissioner drew the attention of all Governments to the appeal for contributions launched by the General Assembly, the Commission and the other sponsors of the joint declaration. She stated that funding requests for 2001 were anticipated to amount to US$ 12 million. She urged Governments in a position to do so to contribute to the Fund or substantially to increase their contributions, preferably by 1 March 2001, before the next session of the Board.

10. Every year, the secretariat of the Fund organizes technical briefings for interested regular donors in Geneva. One such briefing was held on 15 December 2000 in Geneva, with the participation of representatives of the following permanent missions: Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and United Kingdom. At this briefing, up-to-date information on the amounts available, payments received, pledges and disbursements were presented and the secretariat of the Fund and of the Board answered questions.

11. In its resolution 36/151, in which it established the Fund, the General Assembly authorized the Board to promote and solicit contributions and pledges. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to give the Board all the assistance it might require. The Board comprises Mr. Jaap Walkate (Chair), Mr. Ribot Hatano, Ms. Elizabeth Odio-Benito, Mr. Ivan Tosevski and Mr. Amos Wako. The Board members have the opportunity to solicit contributions at the annual meeting with representatives of the permanent missions to the United Nations Office at Geneva, generally held on the last day of the Board's session. The Commission has introduced the practice of inviting the Chair or a Board member, if they are

present in Geneva during the Commission's session in March/April, to submit to the Commission, under the relevant agenda item, an update on the financial situation of the Fund and to encourage participants to pay their contributions before the Board meeting in May; this was done by Mr. Tosevski on 5 April 2000. The Board Chair, when making field visits to projects, also endeavours to meet the appropriate foreign ministry officials and to encourage them to contribute to the Fund.

12. The General Assembly, by its resolution 55/89, stressed the importance of the work of the Board and requested the Secretary-General to assist the Board in its appeal for contributions and in its efforts to make better known the existence of the Fund and the financial means currently available to it and, to that end, to make use of all existing possibilities, including the preparation, production and dissemination of information materials (para. 25). The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to ensure the provision of adequate staff and facilities for the operation of the Board and of the Fund (para. 26).

IV. NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR 2001

A. Requests received and grants awarded (1993-2000)

13. In order to take into account the disparity between the requests for grants and the available resources which could be allocated for such grants (see table 3 below), as well as the constant upgrading of the projects submitted for funding and the increasing amount of grant funding allocated each year, for several years, the Board has recommended that virtually the total amount should be awarded. As a result, all that is left for the following year is the compulsory reserve, which, in accordance with the United Nations rules applicable to voluntary contributions for humanitarian purposes, is set at 15 per cent of the amount available for grants (see A/55/178, para. 11).

Table 3. Comparison of grants requested and grants awarded (1993-2000)

Year	Requested (US$)	Awarded (US$)	Percentage awarded	Additional amount requested (US$)
2000	10 000 000 (+ 1 748 140)	7 000 000 (+ 1 921 500)	70	3 000 000
1999	8 251 860 (+ 1 451 860)	5 078 500 (+ 868 500)	61.50	3 173 360
1998	6 800 000	4 210 000 (+ 1 173 946)	61.90	2 590 000
1997	6 800 000 (+ 1 181 355)	3 036 054 (+ 500 554)	44.64	3 763 946
1996	5 618 645	2 535 500	45.10	3 083 145
1995	5 827 645	2 719 680	46.60	3 107 965
1994	5 476 959	3 698 080 (+ 1 587 000)	67.50	1 778 879
1993	5 289 413	2 111 880	39.90	3 177 533

B. Estimated needs for 2001

14. In assessing the needs of the Fund for 2001, the secretariat has followed the Board's recommendation at its nineteenth session that the assessment should be realistic and based on, first, admissible requests for grants submitted to the Fund for 2001; second, resources available for the twentieth session; third, the total grants awarded in the previous year; fourth, pledges made; and, fifth, new contributions expected from regular donors which have not yet paid or pledged.

15. If the upward trend observed since 1997 continued (see table 3 above), the Board estimated that the total amount requested from the Fund in 2001 would reach almost US$ 12 million (see A/55/178, para. 16). The increase in requests from 1999 to 2000 is approximately US$ 1.8 million.

16. As on 15 December 2000, total new contributions paid since 15 May 2000 amounted to a mere US$ 180,835 (see table 1 above) and pledges received by the same date to only US$ 816,126 (see table 2 above).

17. In the light of its experience since 1982, the Board believes that regular appeals to donors and a steady increase in contributions will enable the Fund to perform its activities effectively.

18. In paragraph 40 of its resolution 2000/43, the Commission called on the Board to present an updated assessment of the global need for international funding of rehabilitation services for victims of torture. The Board considered this request at its nineteenth session. It felt that it did not have the necessary information to make a realistic assessment of global funding needs for rehabilitation services for victims of torture, other than those which it had submitted to the Fund (see paras. 14-16 above). As, however, the Board's guidelines provide that the Fund should not in principle finance more than one third of the budget of any project submitted to it, the Board might respond that, if the above trend continues in 2001, organizations which have submitted a request to the Fund should approach other donors for the approximately US$ 24 million needed to finance the remaining two thirds. It should also be noted that the Fund finances medical, psychological, social, economic, legal, humanitarian or direct emergency assistance programmes for victims of torture and members of their families, as well as certain vocational training programmes, and not only rehabilitation programmes.

19. The Commission also called upon the Board, in the same paragraph of its resolution, to assess the lessons learned from the activities of the Fund, an exercise that it performs every year when it adopts or reviews its guidelines. The Board presented the lessons learnt from the activities of the Fund to donors at their annual meeting. In May 2000, it also presented these lessons at a meeting with all permanent missions to the Office of the United Nations at Geneva. Salient points of these lessons drawn from the activities of the Fund over the last few years are highlighted by the Board in the procedures and guidelines of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for the Use of Organizations, as revised by the Board on 26 May 2000 (see A/55/178, annex II).

20. Addressing the International Association for Humanitarian Medicine at Palermo, Italy, on 18 November 2000, the Chair of the Board, Mr. Walkate, said that the number of victims of torture and members of their families needing assistance was, of course, unknown, but probably

measured hundreds of thousands across the world. The majority of those were not receiving any treatment at all. Others only had the chance of treatment if they were able to find specialized rehabilitation centres, which were mostly being established in Western countries, because of the increasing number of refugees. The exact amount necessary to fund the assistance that they needed was not known. He pointed out that, under article 14 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, States parties were obliged to ensure, in their legal systems, that the victims of an act of torture obtained redress and fair and adequate compensation, including the means for as full rehabilitation as possible. In reality, however, victims were not often in a position to take the necessary steps against Governments to obtain such compensation. It could be argued, he said, that the General Assembly had assumed a sort of collective responsibility for the rehabilitation of victims of torture in establishing the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture in 1981, with a view to soliciting contributions and distributing them by established assistance pathways. The Fund depended totally on voluntary contributions from Governments, organizations and individuals. It received no financial support from the United Nations regular budget. Over the last 20 years, between 30 and 40 States had become regular and generous donors, enabling the Fund to meet the ever-increasing number of requests for grants from more than 150 non-governmental organizations, rehabilitation centres and other assistance programmes in almost 50 countries and to award almost US$ 7 million in grants in 2000, while the total amount of grants requested came to nearly US$ 10 million. He said that the total amount available for grants had been allocated and that new grant funding would be needed for 2001.

V. HOW TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION

21. Governments, individuals and organizations wishing to make a contribution to the Fund, can do so as follows:

(a) **By bank transfer** to the United Nations Geneva General Fund:

In New York, in United States dollars,
c/o Chase Manhattan Bank, New York,
A/c: 001-1-508629, UNOG General Fund,
G/L: UN-0503456,
United States Banking Code: 021000021

In Geneva, in United States dollars, c/o UBS AG,
PO Box 2770, CH-1211 Geneva 2,
A/c: 240-CO-590-160.1

Or in Swiss francs, c/o UBS AG,
PO Box 2770, CH-1211 Geneva 2,
A/c: 240-CO-590-160.0,
Swift address: UBSWCHZH12A

(b) By **cheque** made out to the "United Nations", to:

The Treasurer, United Nations Office at Geneva,
Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10.

22. In all cases, please specify: "Payee: United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, **a/c CH**".

23. For any further information on the Fund, please contact the secretariat of the Fund, Funds for Voluntary Contributions (Support Services Branch), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Palais Wilson; postal address: United Nations, CH-1211, Geneva 10; tel: +41 22 917 9315; fax: +41 22 917 9017; e-mail: dpremont.hchr@unog.ch.

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CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE QUESTIONS OF: TORTURE AND DETENTION

United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture

Report of the Secretary-General

Corrigendum

The title of table 1 on page 3 should read as follows: "Paid contributions that will be taken into consideration at the twentieth session of the Board of Trustees".

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CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF: TORTURE AND DETENTION

United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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GE.01-12456 (E)

Introduction

1. This addendum updates the information contained in the report of the Secretary-General to the Commission on Human Rights (E/CN.4/2001/59).

I. FINANCIAL STATUS

2. On the eve of the twentieth session of the Board of Trustees of the Fund (18 May-1 June 2001), a total of US$ 1,079,516 had been received to provide humanitarian assistance to victims of torture and to members of their families. Table 1 below, drawn up on 4 April 2001 on the basis of the information available to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, updates table 1 of the main report by providing information on contributions recorded by the United Nations Treasurer after 15 December 2000 (see E/CN.4/2001/59). Canada, Cyprus and Iceland have paid a new contribution for 2001, as recommended by the Commission in its resolution 2000/43 of 2 April 2000.

Table 1. Recently paid contributions that will be taken into consideration at the twentieth session of the Board of Trustees (to be added to table 1 of E/CN.4/2001/59)

State	Amount (US$)	Recorded	Intended for	Contr. No.
Argentina	7 000	18 December 2000	2000	12
"	3 000	22 December 2000	2000	13
Austria	40 000	28 February 2001	2000	17
Belgium	70 277	16 January 2001	2000	11
Canada	17 151	15 December 2000	2000	17
"	40 775	24 January 2001	2001	18
Cyprus	2 767	21 December 2000	2001	13
Czech Republic	5 000	7 December 2000	2000	5
Germany	121 510	25 April 2000	2000	19
Holy See	1 000	26 December 2000	2000	5
Iceland	4 650	11 January 2001	2001	15
Italy	110 519	1 February 2001	1999	11
"	110 519	1 February 2001	2000	12
Sweden	113 345	25 May 2000	2000	14
Switzerland	46 784	15 May 2000	2000	13
Tunisia	1 881	31 January 2001	2000	10
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	196 970	11 May 2000	2000	13
Ms. Rita Maran	50	9 February 2001	2001	12
Total	**893 198**			

3. The total amount pledged is about US$ 7 million (see table 2 below). Pledges need to be paid by 30 April 2001 if they are to be recorded by the United Nations Treasurer and allocated at the twentieth session of the Board of Trustees.

Table 2. Pledges

State	Amount (US$)	For the year	Recorded on	Contr. No.
Algeria	5 000	2001	2 November 2000[a]	10
Brazil	10 000	1995	20 December 1994	7
"	10 000	1996	2 November 1995	8
"	10 000	1998	4 November 1997	9
Chile	10 000	2001	2 November 2000[a]	9
Cyprus	2 174	2001	2 November 2000[a]	13
Denmark	368 550	2001	19 February 2001	19
Italy	110 519	2001	5 July 2000	13
Liechtenstein	5 952	2001	27 March 2001	13
Monaco	10 000	2000	18 February 1999[b]	7
"	10 000	2001	2 November 2000[a]	8
Netherlands	900 000	2000 and 2001	13 March 2001[a]	19 and 20
Norway	112 360	2001	12 February 2001	16
Tunisia	1 393	2001	2 November 2000[a]	11
Turkey	5 000	2001	2 November 2000[a]	3
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	216 666	1999	2 February 1999[c]	12
"	235 294	2001	25 January 2001	14
United States of America	5 000 000	2001	4 April 2001	21
Total	7 022 908			

[a] Pledged at the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities on 2 November 2000 in New York.

[b] Cheque given to OHCHR N.Y. Office but not received by the United Nations Treasurer or OHCHR Geneva.

[c] The payment of $130,000 for 1999 was apparently paid to the United Nations Office for Project Services (this is now being checked by the OHCHR administration).

II. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

4. At the time of writing (4 April 2001), the total amount of grants requested by non-governmental organizations for 2001 was about US$ 11 million whereas some US$ 10 million were requested in 2000 (see E/CN.4/2001/59, table 3). The upward trend observed since 1997 has therefore continued.

5. As the Fund has so far received contributions amounting to only about US$ 1 million, the amount needed by 30 April 2001 to satisfy all the requests for funding received from non-governmental organizations would be over US$ 13 million since, in addition to the amount needed for grants, an additional 13 per cent would be required to cover programme support costs

and a further 15 per cent to provide the compulsory operating cash reserve, in accordance with the United Nations rules on the administration of United Nations general trust funds for humanitarian assistance.

III. FUND-RAISING

6. In the light of the alarming financial situation of the Fund, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Jaap Walkate (Netherlands), launched an urgent appeal to regular donors through their Permanent Missions to the United Nations Office at Geneva (see annex). The aim of this appeal was to remind them that their contributions to the Fund should be paid before 30 April 2001 so that they could be recorded at the twentieth session of the Board.

7. In accordance with past practice of the Bureau of the Commission on Human Rights, whereby the Chairman or a member of the Board of Trustees present in Geneva is invited to present the report of the Secretary-General to the Commission, a member of the Board, Ivan Tosevski, will address the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-seventh session, under the relevant agenda item, to give interested Governments and non-governmental organizations the latest information on the needs of the Fund.

8. At the end of its twentieth session, the Board of Trustees will hold a briefing for donors, as it does every year, on the allocation and use of contributions received. The briefing is planned for Friday, 1 June 2001, at 3 p.m.

IV. HOW TO CONTRIBUTE

9. Governments, individuals and organizations wishing to make a contribution to the Fund can do so as follows:

(a) **By bank transfer** to the United Nations Geneva General Fund:

In New York, in United States dollars,
c/o Chase Manhattan Bank, New York,
A/c: 001-1-508629, UNOG General Fund,
G/L: UN-0503456,
United States Banking Code: 021000021

In Geneva, in United States dollars, c/o UBS AG,
PO Box 2770, CH-1211 Geneva 2,
A/c: 240-CO-590-160.1

Or in Swiss francs, c/o UBS AG,
PO Box 2770, CH-1211 Geneva 2,
A/c: 240-CO-590-160.0,
Swift address: UBSWCHZH12A

(b) By **cheque** made out to the "United Nations", to:

The Treasurer, United Nations Office at Geneva,
Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10.

10. In all cases, please specify: "Payee: United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, **a/c CH**".

11. For any further information on the Fund, please contact the secretariat of the Fund at the Humanitarian Trust Funds Unit, Support Services Branch, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Palais Wilson; postal address: United Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10; tel: +41 22 917 9315; fax: +41 22 917 9017; e-mail: dpremont.hchr@unog.ch.

Annex

LETTER DATED 27 MARCH 2001 FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE FUND ADDRESSED TO THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES OF REGULAR DONORS TO THE FUND TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA

Dear Ambassador,

We very much appreciate the regular and substantial contribution of your Government to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture. I have the honour to bring to your attention several provisions of General Assembly resolution 55/89 of 4 December 2000 (para. 23), Commission on Human Rights resolution 2000/43 of 20 April 2000 (para. 36), the Joint Appeal of 26 June 2000 by the Board of Trustees of the Fund, the Committee against Torture, the Special Rapporteur on torture and the High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the appeal letter of 18 October 2000 by the High Commissioner, appealing for new contributions to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture.

The General Assembly, the Commission, the Board of Trustees of the Fund, the Committee against Torture, the Special Rapporteur on torture and the High Commissioner expressed gratitude and appreciation to Governments having contributed to the Fund and appealed to all Governments to respond favourably to requests for contributions to the Fund, if possible on a regular basis and annually before the session of the Board of Trustees of the Fund. To satisfy the ever-increasing demand for assistance, they recommended that Governments increase substantially the level of contributions. The next session of the Board is scheduled to take place from 18 May to 1 June 2001. Contributions should be paid before the session of the Board, since the Board, when making recommendations for grants, can only take into consideration contributions paid and duly recorded by the United Nations Treasurer.

Requests for assistance for 2001 amount to some US$ 11 million. However, the Fund has so far received contributions amounting to only about US$ 1 million.

I would therefore very much appreciate if you could kindly make the necessary arrangements to ensure that your regular contribution is paid before the end of April 2001 at latest, in order for the Board to be able to take into consideration the contributions duly registered by the United Nations Treasurer and to fulfil its mandate.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, and on my own behalf, I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

I remain, dear Ambassador,

(Signed) Jaap WALKATE
Chairman, Board of Trustees,
United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture

To all donors to the Fund

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NATIONS

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CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

The incompatibility of racism with democracy

Report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 2000/40 of 20 April 2000, in which the Commission urged States to reinforce their commitment to promote tolerance and to fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance as a way to strengthen democracy and transparent and accountable governance, and invited the mechanisms of the Commission and the treaty bodies, in particular the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, to continue to pay particular attention to violations of human rights stemming from the rise of racism and xenophobia in political circles and society at large, especially as regards their incompatibility with democracy.

Preparations for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance

2. The World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance will be held in Durban, South Africa, from 31 August to 7 September 2001. In preparation for the World Conference, five regional expert seminars were held in 2000 with the overarching theme, "Trends, priorities and obstacles in combating racism and racial discrimination". Each seminar addressed a specific sub-theme, as follows:

Remedies available for victims of racial discrimination, Geneva, 16-18 February 2000;

Protection of minorities and other vulnerable groups and strengthening human rights capacity at the national level, Warsaw, 5-7 July 2000;

Migrants and trafficking in persons with particular reference to women and children, Bangkok, 5-7 September 2000;

Prevention of ethnic and racial conflicts, Addis Ababa, 4-6 October 2000;

Economic, social and legal measures to combat racism, with particular reference to vulnerable groups, Santiago, 25-27 October 2000

3. Two regional intergovernmental meetings were also organized in Strasbourg from 11 to 13 October 2000 and at the end of February 2001 in Santiago. Two more are planned, in Dakar and Tehran.

Treaty bodies

4. Attention to non-discrimination, as a fundamental rule of international human rights law, infuses the work of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee against Torture.

5. For the first session of the Preparatory Committee of the World Conference, held in Geneva from 1 to 5 May 2000, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights submitted a document (A/CONF.189/PC.1/14) in which it reaffirmed the importance of education in the fight against racism and racial discrimination.

6. The Human Rights Committee has undertaken to prepare a General Comment dealing with the implications of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights with regard to racial discrimination. As a preliminary step, the Committee has assembled extracts of concluding observations dealing with racist issues and summaries of the Committee's views on two communications examined under the Optional Protocol to the Covenant.

7. The Committee against Torture, in reviewing States parties' reports, has repeatedly expressed alarm at the use of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment against vulnerable groups, including national and ethnic minorities, asylum-seekers, refugees and non-citizens. The Committee has noted that torture and ill-treatment can occur more easily in societies that tolerate discrimination of any kind. As its contribution to the World Conference, the Committee has submitted its concerns and recommendations for action aimed at suppressing torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment that result from racism, xenophobia and discrimination.

8. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has prepared a comprehensive document containing, inter alia, recommendations on: the five themes of the World Conference; cooperation of States with international, regional and subregional bodies; measures to be taken in favour of ethnic minorities; and early warning and preventive measures. The Committee has included a compilation of best practices by States to protect and promote the rights of persons belonging to different national, ethnic, racial or other groups. During its fifty-seventh session (31 July - 25 August 2000), the Committee held a two-day thematic discussion on the issue of discrimination against Roma people. The Committee adopted a general recommendation which, inter alia, urges States parties to take measures to prevent racial violence against Roma people and to improve their standards of living.

Special procedures

9. The Special Rapporteur on the right to education, in her preliminary report submitted in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/33 (E/CN.4/1999/49 of 13 January 1999), noted that "a focus on human rights education provides an opportunity to balance the previously prohibitory approach in international human rights law by a constructive one. A great deal of effort has targeted the prohibition of incitement to discrimination through prejudicial portrayal of racial or ethnic minorities, or migrants, or women and girls". She also noted a number of projects aimed at the revision of existing curricula and textbooks or the creation of new ones so as to convey positive images rather than merely prohibiting negative ones.

10. The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, in his report to the Commission on Human Rights (E/CN.4/2001/16), calls for special attention to the Roma, to ensure their full integration into their respective societies.

11. The Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, in her report (E/CN.4/2000/82) has noted that the core of the problem lies in everyday customs, which is where the primary manifestations take place and where they are the most ingrained. Such customs are linked to a number of forms of behaviour that must be rooted out by taking specific and determined action to promote human rights and democracy.

12. The Working Group on Indigenous Populations, in its latest report (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2000/24 of 17 August 2000) made several recommendations for the full and active participation of indigenous representatives in the World Conference and its preparatory process, with a view to ensuring that the concerns of indigenous peoples are given due exposure. The Working Group believes that, amongst other things, the World Conference could contribute concrete suggestions for combating all forms of racism and racial discrimination against indigenous peoples.